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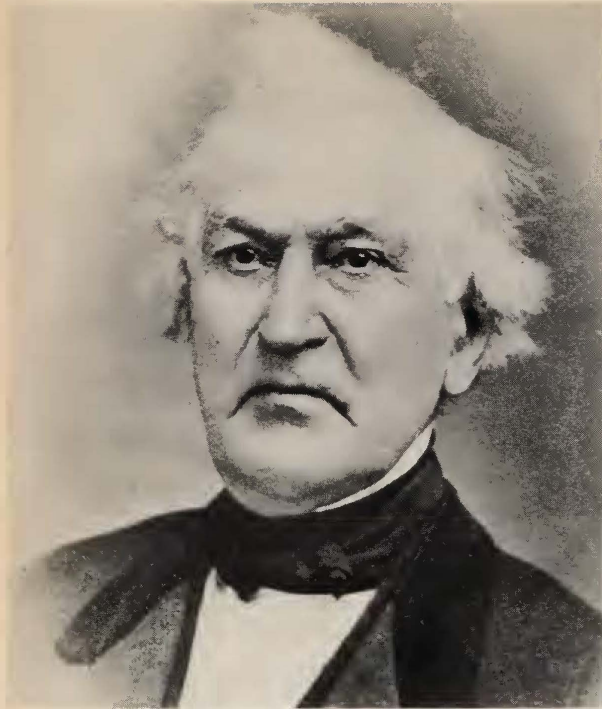
The Most Interviewed Witness

Author(s): Richard Lloyd Anderson

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Abstract: David Whitmer represents “the last surviving witness” of the Book of Mormon plates. This article presents a number of interviews with Whitmer by various figures who interrogated him at times throughout his life.



A mature David Whitmer, at age 72, in 1877 in Richmond, Missouri

New Evidence
from
Modern Witnesses
(Part 8)

The Most Inter- viewed Witness



An aged David Whitmer, in the last year of his life, age 82 or 83

By Dr. Richard Lloyd Anderson

• No testimony of direct revelation in the world's history is better documented than the testimony of the Book of Mormon witnesses. Since David Whitmer was widely publicized as "the last-surviving witness" prior to his death in 1888, he was interviewed more extensively than the others. He said that thousands came to inquire, and over fifty of these conversations are reported in reasonable detail in contemporary diaries, letters, and newspapers, supplemented by later recollections. This examination and cross-examination furnishes a detailed historical record containing significant questions that one would direct to the witness, and his specific and positive answers. Consequently, today's investigator can test David Whitmer's convictions just as well as the visitor of the past century who talked with him personally.

By means of the many conversations with the last-surviving witness, one may reconstruct a line of questioning on the central points of

the revelation that came to him. The following replies are taken from the better recorded interviews of about the last decade of his life. Since these responses can be documented in multiple situations, such a composite interview gives a fair idea of the impact of a private talk with David Whitmer:¹

Q: Is your published testimony accurate?

A: "As you read my testimony given many years ago, so it stands as my own existence, the same as when I gave it, and so shall stand throughout the cycles of eternity."²

Q: When did this event take place?

A: "It was in June, 1829, the very last part of the month. . . ."³

Q: What was the approximate time of day?

A: "It was about 11 a.m."⁴

Q: What were the circumstances of the vision?

A: "[We] went out into the woods nearby, and sat down on a log and talked awhile. We then

kneeled down and prayed. Joseph prayed. We then got up and sat on the log and were talking, when all at once a light came down from above us and encircled us for quite a little distance around, and the angel stood before us."⁵

Q: Describe the angel.

A: "He was dressed in white, and spoke and called me by name and said, 'Blessed is he that keepeth His commandments.' This is all that I heard the angel say."⁶

Q: Did the angel have the Book of Mormon plates?

A: "[He] showed to us the plates, the sword of Laban, the Directors, the Urim and Thummim, and other records. Human language could not describe heavenly things and that which we saw."⁷

Q: Did the vision take place under natural circumstances?

A: "The fact is, it was just as though Joseph, Oliver and I were sitting right here on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light. It was not like the light of the sun,

nor like that of a fire, but more glorious and beautiful. It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this light, immediately before us, about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer, who was sitting 2 or 3 feet from him) there appeared, as it were, a table; with many records on it—besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the sword of Laban, the Directors, and the Interpreters. I saw them as plain as I see this bed (striking his hand upon the bed beside him), and I heard the voice of the Lord as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life declaring that they were translated by the gift and power of God.”⁸

Q: Can you explain the supernatural power that surrounded you?

A: “All of a sudden I beheld a dazzlingly brilliant light that surpassed in brightness even the sun at noonday, and which seemed to envelop the woods for a considerable distance around. Simultaneous with the light came a strange entrancing influence which permeated me so powerfully that I felt chained to the spot, while I also experienced a sensation of joy absolutely indescribable.”⁹

Q: “Did you see the Urim and Thummim?”

A: “I saw the Interpreters in the holy vision; they looked like whitish stones put in the rim of a bow—looked like spectacles, only much larger.”¹⁰

Q: Did you see an actual table?

A: “You see that small table by the wall? . . . Well, there was a table about that size, and the heavenly messenger brought the several plates and laid them on the table before our eyes, and we saw them. . . .”¹¹

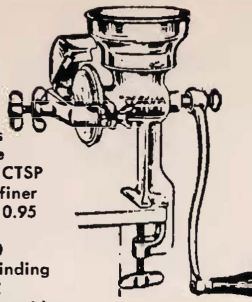
Q: Did you handle the plates?

A: “I did not handle the plates—only saw them.”¹² “Joseph, and I think Oliver and Emma told me about the plates, and described

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them to me, and I believed them, but did not see except at the time testified of.”¹³

Q: How clearly could you see the plates?

A: “[T]he angel stood before us, and he turned the leaves one by one.”¹⁴

[H]e held the plates and turned them over with his hands, so that

they could be plainly visible. . . .”¹⁵

Q: “Did the angel turn all the leaves before you as you looked on it?”

A: “No, not all, only that part of the book which was not sealed, and what there was sealed appeared as solid to my view as wood.”¹⁶

Q: “Can you describe the plates?”

A: “They appeared to be of gold,

about six by nine inches in size, about as thick as parchment, a great many in number and bound together like the leaves of a book by massive rings passing through the back edges. The engraving upon them was very plain and of very curious appearance.”¹⁷

Q: Is it possible that you imagined this experience?

A: “[O]ur testimony is true. And if these things are not true, then there is no truth; and if there is no truth, there is no God; and if there is no God, there is no existence. But I know there is a God, for I have heard His voice and witnessed the manifestation of his power.”¹⁸

Q: “Do you remember the peculiar sensation experienced upon that occasion?”

A: “Yes, I remember it very distinctly. And I never think of it, from that day to this, but what that spirit is present with me.”¹⁹

How does one measure the truth of such testimony? The person with faith will realize (as Paul insisted) that spiritual truths must be spiritually verified. Although expecting to be believed, David Whitmer advised prayer as the necessary supplement to the human testimony of witnesses: “If you are open to investigation and conviction, I pray you to read the Book of Mormon with a prayerful heart. . . . The Book carries conviction with it.”²⁰

Yet practical examination is the inevitable companion of a real love for truth, and one aware of David Whitmer’s testimony cannot face the issues it raises without subjecting its author to basic tests of accuracy. People in everyday life constantly sort out the valid from the invalid on the basis of the reliability of the source of information and the consistency of the report. By these standards the testimony of the last-surviving witness is unsailable, for its author earned the

*

The Spoken Word

Richard L. Evans

For lessons we refuse to learn

Life is good—if we will live to let it be. It is also difficult at times. No one ever said it wouldn’t be. Certainly the Father of us all did not say so. But, as a loving Father, he has given us counsel and precautions, and has “warned and forewarned” us according to his own words. In a sense, he says to us: Don’t clutter up your life with things that are sure to damage the mind, distress the spirit, which are sure to destroy health and peace, and embarrass and disquiet conscience, and cause a complexity of personal problems. Some things are good for man. Some things are not good for man. This is true morally, physically, spiritually. And yet with all the experience of the ages, and all the counsel God has given, we keep repeating many of the same mistakes—in a sense, hitting our heads against a wall, perhaps wondering why the wall remains while our heads are hurting. It comes down to a question of listening to counsel, learning the commandments and keeping them. “. . . The hour will be a priceless one,” wrote Lida Churchill, “in which one faces the truth, for it is a truth, and a most important one, that no one is free in the sense in which the unthinking mind regards freedom.”¹ It is true that we are free to choose, but we are not free from the consequences that come from choosing. We are not free from the operation of law. “To be deceived by our enemies or betrayed by our friends is insupportable,” said a French philosopher; “yet to be deceived by ourselves is worse. . . .”² The Creator knows what will bring happiness and misery to man, and we should not deceive ourselves that we can do anything that is not good for people, or for us personally, without paying a price. “There is a law . . .”—a law of health, a law of happiness, a law of peace and progress—“upon which all blessings are predicated,”³ and we cannot safely set aside what has been tested and proven over and over in the past, without paying a personal price for each lesson we refuse to learn.

¹Lida A. Churchill, “Freedom That Is Bondage,” “Delineator,” January 1907.

²Francois La Rochefoucauld.

³D&C 130:20.

*“The Spoken Word” from Temple Square, presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System February 23, 1969. Copyright 1969.

solid respect of his non-Mormon townsmen through a half century of private integrity, and in this time constantly repeated his experience with the angel and the plates without variance on its fundamental points. As he said himself toward the end of his life, "Those who know me best, well know that I have always adhered to that testimony."²¹

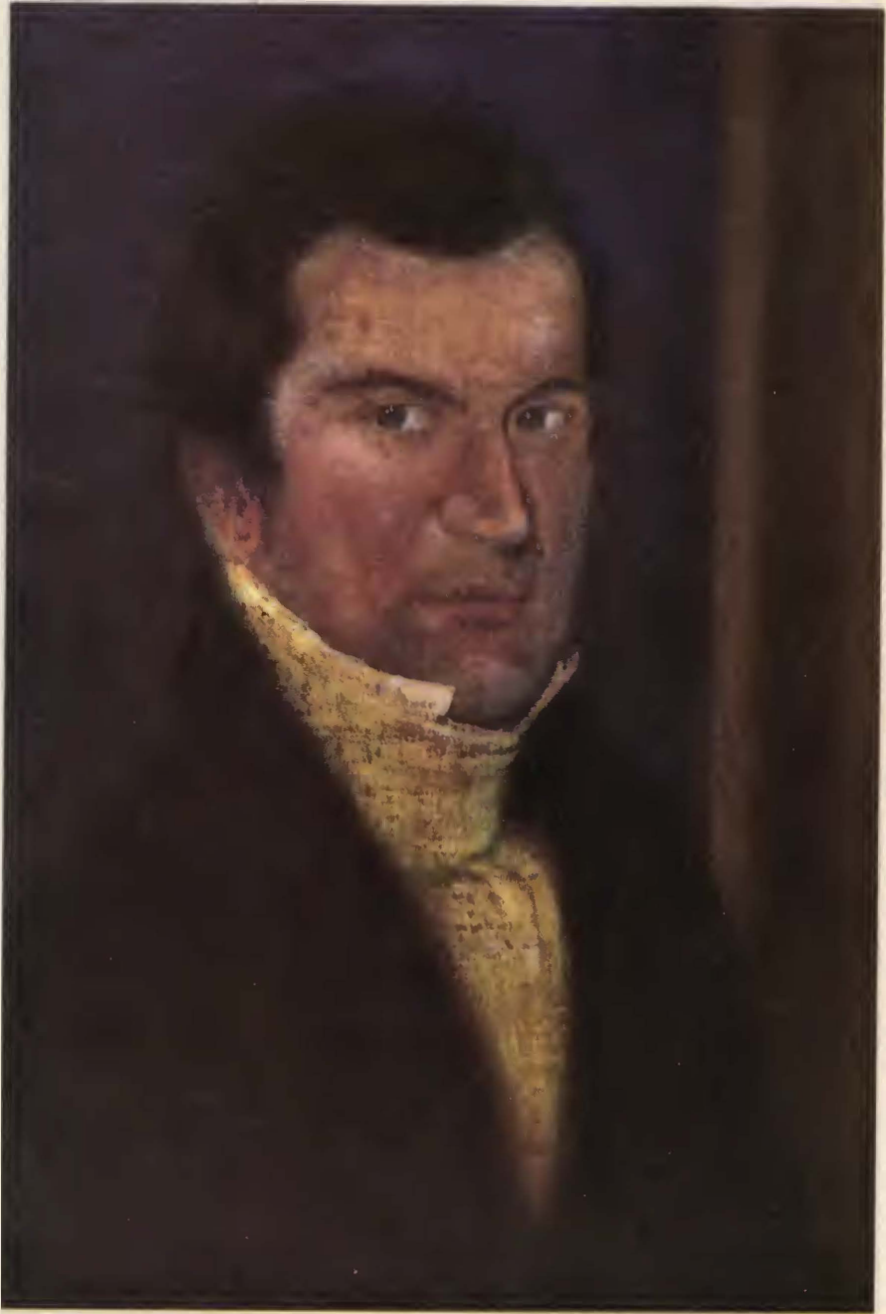
If neither the man nor his manner of relating his story is questionable, what of his motives? Can the distorting force of self-interest be detected? His plain courage in ignoring self-interest in the matter of his testimony was the source of admiration earned from community leaders in Richmond, Missouri. Neither unpopularity, danger, nor tedious inconvenience altered his expressed convictions. David occasionally alluded to an ultimatum delivered by about five hundred armed men to induce him to repudiate his testimony. The likely situation for this incident is the time of his apostasy, after which he was conscripted to serve as a teamster for the militia at the Mormon expulsion in 1838. This is confirmed by Charles W. Wandell's early details about a witness who was "surrounded by an armed mob, had a loaded rifle presented to his breast and was commanded on pain of instant death to deny the Book of Mormon and confess it a fraud, and promised . . . as a reward for such confession the privilege of remaining in the state and the possession of his property." Wandell had information that this witness risked his life rather than deny his testimony: ". . . he raised his hands to heaven and solemnly declared the book to be the word of God."²²

David Whitmer told Heman C. Smith that on command of the mob to "renounce his testimony," he nevertheless reaffirmed it "in the face of death."²³ The most exten-

sive personal account of the incident was related to James H. Hart: "[T]he testimony I gave to that mob made them fear and tremble, and I escaped from them. One gentleman, a doctor, an unbeliever, told me afterwards that the bold and fearless testimony borne on that occasion and the fear that seemed to take hold of the mob had

made him a believer in the Book of Mormon."²⁴

In the above conversation with James H. Hart, the Missouri businessman alluded to "thousands of people" that had sought his comments, "sometimes 15 or 20 in a day." This posed no inconsiderable burden to one with practical responsibilities who naturally avoided



A newly located portrait of David Whitmer, 32 years of age, painted in Kirtland, Ohio, at the peak of his service and devotion to the Church. (Picture, courtesy of Mrs. Dorothy Twelves Freeman, great-great granddaughter of David Whitmer)

“Impeccable in reputation, consistent in inter-views, capable of detecting delusion--no witness is more compelling than David Whitmer”

the spotlight of publicity. An example of this constant personal pressure comes from the visit of Henry Moon. One of his missionary contacts in Missouri, John Lefler, desired to talk with David Whitmer personally, and the pair arrived in Richmond January 9, 1872, at the unfortunate time of supper hour, just after dark, and in the circumstances of an evidently difficult day with sickness in the Whitmer family. The Book of Mormon witness sought to avoid the inquirers by leaving the house to perform an errand at his livery stable, but they persistently followed him. Yet after stating that “he had not time to talk that evening,” David’s sense of duty about his testimony overcame his personal irritability:

“We followed him in the street, and I told him that the gentleman with me had come to hear what he had to say with regard to the Book of Mormon. I told Mr. Whitmer I had been reading the testimony of the Witnesses to Mr. Lefler, and . . . he was anxious to hear . . . for himself. ‘Now Mr. Whitmer, here is the gentleman. What have you to say to him?’ Mr. Whitmer turned towards Mr. Lefler and said, ‘Well, God Almighty requires at my hand to bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. It is the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, translated from the plates by the gift and power of God by Joseph Smith. . . . I know I tell the truth.’”²⁵

More than one person appealed privately to the last-surviving witness to disclose deceit if it existed. Two such earnest requests virtually eliminate the possibility of conscious deception on the part of David Whitmer. James H. Moyle

was later Assistant Secretary of Treasury in two U.S. administrations. Graduating with legal training at the University of Michigan in 1885, he determined to cross-examine the remaining Book of Mormon witness before returning to Utah. Young Moyle journeyed to Richmond, Missouri, secured an appointment with David Whitmer, and spent some time recounting the persecutions and sacrifices of his family because of belief in Mormonism. He further contrasted Whitmer’s situation of not being far from death with his own commencement of a life’s career: “And so I begged of him not to let me go through life believing in a vital falsehood.” The thoughtful law student requested not confirmation, but disclosure: “Was there any possibility that he might have been deceived in any particular?” All of his life Moyle remembered the “unequivocal” affirmation of the testimony: “There was no question about its truthfulness.”²⁶ Entries made in his diary at the time show that David Whitmer gave the young man the same information that he related to scores of others. As a mature lawyer and administrator, Moyle could not accept the view that David Whitmer misrepresented: “To have been insincere seems impossible, would have made him a hideous, soulless mental deformity.”²⁷

David Whitmer’s grandson came to the same conclusion, and no one seems to have been closer to the witness in his closing years than George W. Sweich, a partner in the Whitmer stables and private secretary to David. He had been personally present at numerous interviews and had written many dic-

tated letters reaffirming his grandfather’s story. Through all of this he formed his personal appraisal of the man he lived intimately with, based in large part on private conversation:

“I have begged him to unfold the fraud in the case, and he had all to gain and nothing to lose, but speak the word if he thought so. But he has described the scene to me many times, of his vision about noon in an open pasture. There is only one explanation barring an actual miracle, and that is this: If that vision was not real, it was HYPNOTISM, it was *real* to grandfather IN FACT.”²⁸

Since one cannot successfully challenge David Whitmer’s sincerity, is there a reasonable alternative to his own explanation of the vision? Some have pointed out that the witness was as sure of certain personal revelations as his testimony of the Book of Mormon. While few fail to develop some overconfidence in their own opinions, David Whitmer never put any other incident of his life on the objective grounds of sense experience to the extent that he did his vision of the angel and the plates. Yet, in explaining that event as exceeding sense perception, David Whitmer became the target of a few who jumped to the conclusion that the revelation involved no sense perception. For instance, an interview of 1880 with John Murphy of Caldwell County was published, and David Whitmer insisted that it was erroneous. Murphy had written a tongue-in-cheek report totally emphasizing the spiritual nature of the vision. This undoubtedly distorted what David actually said, since Murphy’s materialistic philosophy was not equipped to explain the miraculous. The point of misunderstanding was the choice between a vision of material plus spiritual perception or a vision of spiritual instead of mate-

rial perception. The latter alternative was too quickly picked by some who talked to both Martin Harris and David Whitmer. The Missouri witness answered Murphy by a public statement "that I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof. . . ."29 The doubting Anthony Metcalf wrote to David Whitmer in 1887 and raised the same issue. The answer of the witness was a testimony of both spiritual and physical elements in the vision: "Of course we were in the spirit when we had the view, for no man can behold the face of an angel, except in a spiritual view, but we were in the body also, and everything was as natural to us, as it is at any time."³⁰

John Murphy also raised the issue of whether David Whitmer had been deceived, suggesting "mesmerism" and appealing to the witness to admit that his testimony was a "delusion."³¹ In terms of scientific psychology, the only person able to answer this question is David Whitmer. The possibility was put to him and ruled out many times. In this case he went to the trouble and expense of publishing his "Proclamation," repeating his testimony and emphasizing his confidence in his own powers of observation: "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear; it was no delusion!"³²

This point is highlighted by an incident during the examination of the Book of Mormon manuscript at the Whitmer home in 1884 by a committee of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Since this event acquired some notoriety, onlookers were often present, one of which was a skeptical Richmond military officer. The soldier discussed the Book of Mormon testimony with the aging witness in a cordial but frank manner, suggesting the possibility that Whitmer "had been mis-

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taken and had simply been moved upon by some mental disturbance, or hallucination, which had deceived him into *thinking* he saw” the angel, plates, and other objects. The immediate reaction of the witness was described by a spectator, Joseph Smith III:

“How well and distinctly I remember the manner in which Elder Whitmer arose and drew himself up to his full height—a little over six feet—and said, in solemn and im-

pressive tones: ‘No sir! I was not under any hallucination, nor was I deceived! I saw with these eyes, and I heard with these ears! *I know whereof I speak!*’”³³

David Whitmer’s “positive and emphatic testimony” solidly impressed the unbelieving questioner. For the sake of courtesy, the RLDS president left the room with the officer, who confessed the difficulty of belief “for us everyday men,” but added: “[O]ne thing is certain

—no man could hear him make his affirmation, as he has to us in there, and doubt for one moment the honesty and sincerity of the man himself. He fully believes he saw and heard, just as he stated he did.”³⁴

No theme permeates the numerous Mormon and non-Mormon interviews more than this one. Few came away unimpressed with the power of David Whitmer’s conviction. In 1886 Edward Stevenson visited him for the second time and talked with the feeble octogenarian, whose frame was reduced to less than a hundred pounds. Reiterating his testimony “as sure as the sun shines and I live,” David Whitmer’s enthusiasm had to be restrained for his own good.³⁵ Three years before, Moroni W. Pratt wrote about the combination of mental alertness and physical infirmity of the witness. During ordinary conversation, David would “falter a little, but when giving his testimony he would straighten up, his voice would be firm, his eye would flash, and one could feel that he spoke by the spirit of truth.”³⁶ Independently reporting these identical details the following year, J. Frank McDowell added: “He would relate the scene with a freshness and earnestness of expression, as though it were of recent occurrence, and not of fifty-five years ago.”³⁷

Since genuineness is better judged by personal contact than reading cold print, these evaluations of the witness himself are as important as the record of what he said. Far from having a pre-packaged statement about the Book of Mormon, David Whitmer spontaneously recalled a personal experience that deeply moved him. The believers’ estimates of the witness are fully substantiated by the reactions of newspaper reporters, a class generally calloused to empty sentimentality. They mea-

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Newspaper advertisement for David Whitmer's Richmond, Missouri, stable

sured their man during interviews and also came away impressed. A detailed and restrained report in the *Chicago Times* contained the candid opinion of the interviewer: "And no man can look at David Whitmer's face for a half-hour, while he charily and modestly speaks of what he has seen, and then boldly and earnestly confesses the faith that is in him, and say that he is a bigot or an enthusiast."³⁸ Joe Johnson, of the neighboring *Plattsburg Democrat*, an astute political analyst, was profoundly affected by the inner conviction of the witness. While describing the vision, David's cold symptoms diminished, "his form straightened," and with "evidently no studied effort" but with "strangely eloquent" tones, he described the vision and "the divine presence." The seasoned Missouri newspaperman classified what he heard as far more than an oddity: "Skeptics may laugh and scoff if they will, but no man can listen to Mr. Whitmer as he talks of his interview with the angel of the Lord, without being most forcibly convinced that he has heard an honest man tell what he honestly believes to be true."³⁹

Those who testified to the truth of the Book of Mormon are modern witnesses not only because they lived in recent time, but also because modern investigation can study their experience. Over a hundred detailed personal statements and interviews with them exist, about half of which come from David Whitmer. Like the others, the modest but intense Missouri businessman admirably stands the test of examination of his person and his story. Impeccable in reputation, consistent in scores of recorded interviews, obviously sincere, and personally capable of detecting delusion—no witness is more compelling than David Whitmer. He answered every objection

thrown at him in a half century of life in Richmond, Missouri, and by sheer moral strength forced a non-Mormon community to take him seriously. Through the miracle of modern communication, his testimony (and that of the other Book of Mormon witnesses) now transcends a community and confronts a world.

What must be as impressive as the words of the modern witnesses is their deep sense of responsibility in reporting their experience. Despite his vigorous differences with most believers in the Book of Mormon, David Whitmer insisted that no one could evade the challenge of this modern revelation: "Kind reader, . . . beware how you hastily condemn that book which I know to be the word of God; for his own voice and an angel from heaven declared the truth of it unto me, and

to two other witnesses who testified on their death-bed that it was true."⁴⁰ Less than a year after voicing this warning, David Whitmer added his death-bed testimony to the historical record. These dramatic details were published in full by the *Richmond Democrat*, but more specific closing words about his experience were given some two weeks earlier to Angus Cannon. Bedridden and "as helpless as a child," the octogenarian was informed by George W. Sweich that his visitor wanted to hear his testimony of the Book of Mormon. After a lifetime of reiteration, the moment was still sacred to the enfeebled witness. Raising his hand, he declared: "My friend, if God ever uttered a truth, the testimony I now bear is true. I did see the angel of God, and I beheld the glory of the Lord, and he declared the record true."⁴¹ ○

FOOTNOTES

¹If noted, a statement of David Whitmer is placed in the first person instead of the third person of a given report. Quotations in this article are only modified in regard to occasional spelling and punctuation.

²Letter of David Whitmer to Dr. James N. Seymour, Dec. 8, 1875, Richmond, Mo., cit. *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 26 (1879), p. 223.

³Journal of Joseph F. Smith; cit. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, 1938), p. 242.

⁴Journal of Edward Stevenson, Dec. 22, 1877.

⁵Letter of William H. Kelley to *Saints' Herald*, Jan. 16, 1882, Coldwater, Mich., cit. *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 29 (1882), p. 68.

⁶*Ibid.*
⁷Journal of George Q. Cannon, Feb. 27, 1884, cit. *Instructor*, Vol. 80 (1945), p. 520. Narrative is changed from third to first person and the clause "he said" deleted.

⁸Reference at n. 3. Parenthetical definitions of "Directors" and "they" have been deleted.

⁹*Omaha Herald*, Oct. 17, 1886, simultaneously released to other dailies. Narrative is changed from third to first person and the clause "Mr. Whitmer says" deleted.

¹⁰Interview notes of Zenas H. Gurley, Jan. 14, 1885; also cit. *Autumn Leaves*, Vol. 5 (1892), p. 452.

¹¹Letter of James H. Hart to *Deseret News*, Aug. 23, 1883, Seneca, Mo., cit. *Deseret Evening News*, Sept. 4, 1883.

¹²Journal of James H. Moyle, June 28, 1885, changed from third to first person.

¹³Journal of Nathan Tanner, Jr., April 13, 1886, changed from third to first person, except the first "me" is unchanged.

¹⁴Letter of P. Wilhelm Poulson to *Deseret News*, Aug. 13, 1878, Ogden, Utah, cit. *Deseret Evening News*, Aug. 16, 1878.

¹⁵*Chicago Times*, Oct. 17, 1881.

¹⁶Reference at n. 14.

¹⁷*Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881.

¹⁸Reference at n. 11.

¹⁹Reference at n. 5.

²⁰David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo., 1887), p. 14.

²¹David Whitmer, *A Proclamation* (Richmond, Mo., 1881).

²²*Western Standard*, Feb. 7, 1857.

²³Letter of Heman C. Smith to *Saints' Herald*, June 28, 1884, Grand Prairie, Tex., cit. *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 31 (1884), p. 442.

²⁴Reference at n. 11.

²⁵Letter of Henry Moon to Joseph F. Smith, Mar. 7, 1872, Farmington, Utah. Cf. Moon's general conference speech, cit. *Deseret Evening News*, April 10, 1872.

²⁶James H. Moyle, "A Visit to David Whitmer," *Instructor*, Vol. 80 (1945), p. 401.

²⁷Joseph E. Cardon and Samuel O. Bennion, *Testimonies of the Divinity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Independence, Mo., 1930), p. 305.

²⁸Letter of George W. Sweich, Sept. 22, 1899, Richmond, Mo., cit. I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism* (London, 1903), pp. 219-20.

²⁹Reference at n. 21.

³⁰Letter of David Whitmer to Anthony Metcalf, March 1887, cit. Anthony Metcalf, *Ten Years Before the Mast* [Malad, Idaho, 1888], p. 74.

³¹*The Hamiltonian*, Hamilton, Mo., Jan. 21, 1881.

³²Reference at n. 21.

³³Memoirs of Joseph Smith III, cit. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (Independence, Mo., 1952), pp. 311-12.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵Letter of Edward Stevenson to Daniel H. Wells, Feb. 16, 1886, New York City, cit. *Milennial Star*, Vol. 48 (1886), p. 156.

³⁶Letter of Moroni W. Pratt to *Bear Lake Democrat*, July 3, 1883, Covington, Ind., cit. *Bear Lake Democrat*, July 14, 1883.

³⁷Letter of J. Frank McDowell to *Saints' Herald*, July 22, 1884, Olivet, Iowa, cit. *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 31 (1884), p. 508.

³⁸*Chicago Times*, Aug. 7, 1875.

³⁹Cit. *Richmond Democrat*, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 1888, attributed to "an article written by Joe Johnson. . . ."

⁴⁰*Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 43.

⁴¹Journal of Angus Cannon, Jan. 7, 1888. Cf. Cannon's Tabernacle speech, cit. *Deseret Evening News*, Feb. 12, 1888.